

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-08

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FM AMEMBASSY BUDAPEST

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C O N F I D E N T I A L BUDAPEST 2695

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LIMDIS

FOR DEPUTY ASSISTANT SECRETARY ARMITAGE

EO 11652: GDS

TAGS: EWWT HU

SUBJECT: HUNGARIAN SHIPS/U.S. PORTS

1. DURING CALL ON TRANSPORT MINISTER RODONYI RECENTLY, HE MENTIONED THAT HUNGARIAN MERCHANT MARCKE KTAEBJLED TO DOUBLE ITS TONNAGE UNDER NEXT FIVE YEAR PLAN. WHEN MCAULIFFE ADMITTED THAT HE HAD NOT KNOWN THAT THIS LAND-LOCKED COUNTRY HAD OCEAN-GOING VESSEWLS FLYING ITSILAG, RODONYI EYALEDSPTC VKOH INTENDS BOOST TONNAGE FROM PRESENT 50,000 TO PLANNED 100,000 BY END OF DECADE.

2. RODONYI THEN EXPLAINED THAT HUNGARIAN MERCHANT MEN NOW PRINCIPALLY INVOLVED IN HAULING CARGO TO AND FROM SOUTH AMERICA. THEY ARE NOW DETERRED FROM ENTERING U.S. PORTS, MINISTER SAID, BY BUREAUCRATIC MAZE THAT REQUIRES TWO WEEKS LEAD TIME. IF GOH IN COURSE OF NORMALIZATION OF RELATIONS GAINS . HOWEVER, THERE WILL BE MORE CARGO TO TRANSPORT, AND HUNGARIANS WOULD HOPE FOR BETTER AND SPEEDIER ACCESS TO AMERICAN PORTS.

3. COMMENT: BY ANY STANDARD, THIS IS A MINI-ISSUE. IT
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IS UNLIKELY THAT HUNGARIAN MARINE WILL EVER POSE COMMERCIAL

THREAT TO U.S. INTERESTS. IT IS ALSO A ONE-WAY STREET;
THERE ARE NO RECIPROCAL PENALTIES AFFECTING U.S. NOR DOES
ANY ONE EXPECT TO SEE VESSELS OF U.S. REGISTRY DOCKING AT
HUNGARIAN QUAIS IN NEAR FUTURE.

4. EMBASSY FILES HAVE FAILED TO DISGORGE ANY USEFUL
BACKGROUND INFORMATION ON TREATMENT ACCORDED MERCHANT
VESSEL OF USSR, POLAND, ROMANIA, EAST GERMANY AND BULGARIA
THAT TOUCH U.S. PORTS IF USG DEAL WITH HUNGARIANS
AND OTHER EE'S EVEN HANDEDLY WITH REGARD TO SHIP CLEARANCES,
ITEM WITH MAGYARS THAN WITH CERTAIN OTHER EE'S LIKLY WOULD
SEE WORTHY OF A HARD SECOND LOOK.

5. FROM EMBASSY'S POINT OF VIEW, IT WOULD BE IDEAL TO LAUNCH
A LOW COST/NO COST INITIATIVE WITH A VIEW TO GIVING FURTHER
IMPETUS TO THE PROCESS OF DETENTE. ONE COULD DO THAT BY
SENDING HUNGARIAN FOREIGN OFFICE A NOTE - WITHOUT PRIOR
HINTS OR CONSULTATION - ANNOUNCING THAT USG HAS DECIDED
TO RELAX OR MODIFY IN ONE RESPECT OR ANOTHER ITS RULES
CONCERNING VISITS TO U.S. PORTS BY HUNGARIAN MERCHANT SHIPS AND
FROM HERE IT LOOKS LIKE A CLEVER KNIGHT'S GAMBIT -- AT
LITTLE OR NO COST -- THAT PUTS U.S IN GOOD POSITION UP
SEQUENT FORKING MOVE.
MCAULIFFE

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